

To: Appropriation Committee

February 18, 2016

Good Afternoon,

My name is Velma Williams-Estes and I live in Meriden, CT. I am a member of advocacy groups ***Our Families Can't Wait*** and ***#PeopleMatter Coalition***.

My daughter Deborah Ann is 48 years old with Down syndrome and I/DD (intellectual and Developmental Disabilities). She does not read, write or understand how to independently cope with everyday living situations, therefore, Deborah needs assistant in all aspects of her life at all times. Prior to his death, her father and I provided all the above and much more for her. But now without my husband, *I* am her only caregiver doing all of this alone. Deborah will need a home, care and love when I am no longer here or unable to provide these things for her. The State should be that support but says it does not have the funding.

I definitely *do not support* **HB 5044**. It allows more money to be cut from existing services that are already inadequate. Also, families are so tired of the current DSS glitches. Imagine adding the task of handling Medicaid bills, etc.....??!!!! Not a good idea, Governor. For too long, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) has been deprived of the funding necessary to provide quality services for **ALL** of the state's residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) to live their best lives. The most recent proposed cut of **\$59 million dollars** by the Governor would, if implemented, be devastating for people with I/DD and their families. I urge you to support our efforts to protect our loved ones from such inhumane decisions. I also urge you to *support* **HB 5128**. This gives DDS the opportunity to keep funding that was originally designated to that Agency. Please support the following:

- **DDS - Develop a Workable Plan for All With I/DD**
- **Meet & Sustain Full Funding for DDS**
- **FIX that Archaic DDS Wait List**
- **Provide & Protect Services and Continuity of Care to Loved Ones**
- **Protect the Funding/Wages of All Providers of Services**

We ask **YOU** and **Governor Malloy** to find the courage to stand strong and stop these devastating and unfair cuts that are being proposed!! Our loved ones are people who are just like you but without the ability to support their individual needs. Families are struggling to care for loved ones as best as we can but desperately need help. Remember, any one of you could need this same crucial support at some point in your lives!!!! Think about it, or better yet, **PRAY ABOUT IT!!**

Thank you for your time,

Velma Williams-Estes

Mother, Legal Guardian and Caregiver of Deborah Ann